

*This is  
brief and sketchy  
Darling, the letter  
I mean, but  
I'm back now and will soon be with you.*

Bunny Darling;

Saturday 29 December 1945

*I love you with all my heart  
Mickie*

Here it is, the fifth day of our journey and I am about to "blow my top". I am terribly discouraged. I guess this should not be so because I am on my way home but it is because these last five days have been almost as long as all the rest of the time I have spent overseas. The days just drag on in the slowest pace imaginable and it seems that the ship will never get to the States,

I am not on the ship I thought we would come home on, the Japaro, but am on the Pres. Johnson instead. It is one of the Dollar Line ships which was built in 1904, and was decommissioned before the war broke out and was put on active duty again when the war started. It is a combination passenger and cargo ship, although it is hard to imagine anyone paying for passage on anything like this, and has a top speed of about 14 knots an hour, a speed which I believe is what it was capable of accomplishing in its prime, and with a very strong tail wind. As we are bucking a headwind of considerable proportions at the present time I am inclined to think that this particular patch of water in which we find ourselves at the present time looks suspiciously like the same little patch of water we were in when the wind came up. At least I would feel a lot better about the whole thing if the wind would shift and hit us from the rear.

My first few days on board have not been as bad as I had anticipated. Do not get me wrong though because I was sick. Oh yes, but not for very long. I started feeling a little under the weather the very first morning and just barely made the #2 deck latrine where my first breakfast aboard was offered up as a sacrifice to the gods that make ships rock. They must have been appeased by this because I have felt tolerably well ever since, and we have had some very rough weather today. I stand a good chance of losing some more weight by the time I get off the ship though because they only feed us two meals a day now with a very light lunch thrown in at noontime. My usual breakfast since I got aboard has been bread and milk. This is about all that interests me at this early time of day, everything else has the hint of greasiness about it and this my stomach refuses to recognize as fit food to be placed in an empty stomach at the start of a day. The noontime lunch consists of a sandwich and an article of fruit, a meager repast to be sure. In the evening the real meal comes, then we have the works; this evening's meal for example: salty corned beef, cabbage, potato, halved apricots, bread and butter, and coffee. On this diet you can realize that I do not stand a chance in the world of putting on any excess avoirdupois so I should get home to you at about 170 pounds, fighting weight. That won't be too bad will it? I still don't see why you object to a little excess weight to be carried Darling, just, think there will be more of me to love, wouldn't that be nice?

In case you are wondering where I was able to get the typewriter I will clarify the situation. I am now working on the staff of the paper here on the ship as an artist. It is a very good job and keeps me busy most of the time. I come up here bright and early in the morning, right after chow, and just hang around the office all day cutting stencils. The two features that I take care of are a little map showing the approximate position of the ship day by day, and it doesn't change much believe me, and a daily profile on some one of the officers on the ship. A writer and I conduct the interview, while he interrogates the subject I sketch him, the interviewee not the interviewer. I am getting so that I can turn out a pencil sketch in very short order indeed. I then have to scale down the pencil sketch to the size I want it to be on the finished stencil and then cut it. It doesn't take much time for me to do this now. I will be an expert at quick sketching if this ship takes as long as I think it will to get me home.

The privileges that accrue from this job are not many but all that I am interested in is passing time away so that the day will not be so long in coming when I will be in your arms once more. I am able to get in to early chow in the evening, I could in the morning but it is not worth getting up that early for, and having one of the fellows in the staff get our lunch for us at noon. This way I hardly have to leave this place at all except to go to bed or to take a shower or perform some of the other necessities of life. We put in our PX orders separately and don't have to worry about waiting our turn because we get the stuff before anyone else. We are able to get a coke and a can of fruit juice daily, both cold. The PX officer also got us each a sweater and a pair of wool knit socks, both articles are hand knitted and are quite nice. All in all I am quite satisfied with the job. We are right near the chaplain's office and I do most of my work in there because our quarters are too crowded, our office I should say although it is nothing but a little hole in the wall and there are about sixteen of us on the staff. Since one of my friends got himself the job of Chaplain's assistant, I can talk to him while I work. This also helps to pass the time of day.

It is very strange about how I feel about being on this ship right now. I had always thought that when the time came for me to go aboard the ship, that I would be all enthused and cheerful, practically singing my way aboard. It was not this way though. It was just as if I had been going on just another boat trip. Before I got aboard I was sure that the trip home would be one of lightness and airiness, but it is not so. I am just a very sad and morose man who is still far from the woman he loves and who has not quite grasped the fact that this is really it and that he is on his way home. Even when I speak of it this way it does not sound as if it were really true. It will not seem real until I am with you and have you in my arms again. Then and only then will I be sure that at last the most wonderful day in the world is at hand and that you will very soon be my wife. I can see now just how hard it is going to be to leave you to go back home after we get our marriage license, even though it will only be for a week it will be too long to be away from you after waiting all this time. It is really incredible that I could love anyone as much as I love you Sweetheart, incredible and so very marvelous that at times it seems it could never be that you love me too and that you will be my wife. I have to take out your letters and reread them to assure myself that it is not all a dream that will end and will leave me in the midst of emptiness. No woman was ever loved as much as you are by me Honey, and it will always be this way. All I ask is that you go on loving me the way you have and we shall be the happiest couple in the world. Darling you are so beautiful and lovable. I will never be able to get home to you a minute too soon, ever.

I hope you had some luck looking for an apartment for us Darling because I do want for us to have our own apartment when we are married. A place all our own where we can do just as we please. My fingers are crossed and I am hoping desperately that you can find a nice place for us to live in after we are married.

It is about time for the movie to start Darling so I will take leave of you now and go out to watch it. I will be back again soon to add some more to this letter so don't go away yet. Until I am back I will give you a big good-night kiss to keep you until I do come back, remember that I love you Darling, remember that always and keep telling yourself that too so you can never forget it. That is one fact I want you to realize all the time. I love you just as I love life because you are all the life there is for me, and all that there ever shall be.

Monday 31 December 1945

Here I am back again. It is now New Year's Eve and the last day of the year 1945. I am glad to say goodbye to this year because it is my last year of army life, and also my last year of unmarried life. From now on I am going to be very much married to a very wonderful girl. The most wonderful girl in the world.

The ship is still wallowing along in its slow way. We are threatening to slice a couple of days off the time we thought it would take to get home. I hope we do because my most immediate and pressing concern is getting home. I want to be with you very soon. We are supposed to head north now and thus cut quite a few miles off our course, maybe even a day or more. We may be in as early as the thirteenth, although it is more likely that we will be in about the fourteenth or fifteenth. We were not supposed to get in until the sixteenth. There is still a heck of a wind; it seems that we are in the trade wind belt but that the skipper is trying to head north to get out of it and have a little smoother sailing the rest of the way in.

The hold is getting better and better to live in now. It has been cool enough the past few nights that I have slept with the sheet drawn up around my neck. I am afraid that you are not going to get all of the drawing linen which I took with me from the Command Darling. I still have one piece left which I am saving but the other two are being used as sheets to keep the blankets off me. It makes a heck of a difference having them next to my skin instead of those blankets. What I really want next to me while I sleep is you, can I have that soon Honey? Of course there will not be a heck of a lot of sleeping done but who cares anyway. I have already slept an awful lot.

You can ignore the statement I made a little while ago to the effect that I am in no danger of adding weight while on the ship. I am in danger Honey. I am now eating in the crew's mess. I don't think I will go down there for any meals except breakfast though but that is quite a meal as served in this mess. There are several reasons behind this request. It seems that one of them is that there is satisfaction with the paper we are putting out, that is one of the minor reasons. The main reason is that since the paper seems to be on the ball certain of the crew are afraid of it. I will now explain what I mean. It seems that when a ship docks, the newspapermen swarm all over it trying to find out how conditions were on the ship during the trip. Just the other day the chief steward was accused by the army mess sergeant of giving the troops

the worst food and there was quite a row about it. When we were invited down to eat with the crew the chief steward gave us a little talk about the injustices suffered by stewards who were accused if anything went wrong with the food on the ship. He told us that the Stateside papers like to pry into such rumors and make trouble. Then he showed us menus he was preparing for the troop mess hall and compared them with the menus the mess sergeant had prepared, showing us how much better the ones he prepared were. He added that he also had increased the amount of food he allotted to the troop mess above what the mess sergeant had ordered. I guess his main idea was that newspapermen might ask us how things were aboard the ship and he wanted a favorable answer given. He is giving the men better food now so I guess he was really scared. At any rate I have eaten my last three meals in the crew's mess. There was a bit of a disturbance today though because the mess boys squawked about feeding three extra men. They do not prepare the food, they just serve it. The union has a rule stating that they can only wait on ten men apiece, there are two of them and twenty men to feed exclusive of us, so they balked at feeding us. The steward was very apologetic and said that since they were right under union rules, he couldn't do a thing to them to make them serve us but that he wanted us to go into the kitchen to eat with him at mealtimes. He was quite insistent about this. I am not enthused about the idea and am only going to take my ~~best~~ breakfasts down there, I'll let some other fellow eat lunch and dinner there because I don't want to start eating an awful lot on the ship where I cannot do any exercising at all and will put on weight. I can't afford to do that in the face of your threats of forcing me to diet. I did speak to him about letting all the fellows on the staff go down there to get sandwiches and coffee in the evening, that will help a lot because it is nice to have a snack at that time.

As I write this letter there is the distant sound of rehearsal seeping over the transom from the chaplains office. Some fellows on board were mailed for a radio program the I&E officer wants put on. They had to adapt a radio script so that it could be used for a womanless cast. They have ended up with a show calling for 32 characters, all of which are going to be played by six fellows. It should be a lot of fun. This I&E officer is a lulu. He assigns a noncom to take charge of each of the projects he has in mind and then goes out on the deck to sun himself all day. He doesn't do a bit of work. Once in a while he does come around and then everyone wishes he had stayed away longer. He did not get his commission for being a jolly good fellow.

There are quite a few Negro troops aboard and two of them got into a fifth fight the other night. It ended up with one of them getting cut when he tripped and cut his leg with a knife he had in his pocket. He then ran and got a Jap rifle and bayonet he had and came charging after the other colored boy he had been scuffling with when he fell. There was almost a panic with everyone trying to get out of the hold at once. The two of them were finally rounded up by the OD and one was put in the hospital while the other went in the brig. They had been drinking some liquor they got on the ship. The fellow who had sold them the liquor was picked up and is also in the brig. I guess they are going to throw the book at him. Anyone should know better than to sell liquor on a ship that has both whites and colored boys on it. It is easy enough to start trouble between them without getting them drunk. All the colored boys on the ship are Red Apple men. There are a total of twelve hundred of these Red Apple boys on the ship now, about one third of them are colored. All of these boys are very much put out because the army did not get them home for Christmas. You should hear them bitch. They get very little sympathy from the fellows going home on points though because most of them have just been in the army a very short while and have not been overseas but a few months, this applies to the greater part of them at least.

Just two more weeks and I will be in the States Darling. Of course I will still be a lot farther away from you than I would like to be but at least I'll be somewhere where I can get to where you are by land, and that means a heck of a lot. Till now we have had this damned Pacific Ocean between us. I love you Sweetheart, love you much more than I could ever say. I will tell you this over and over though, hoping that I can start to make you realize just how much it is that I do love you. I will be able to do a much better job of it when I am with you though because this love I have for you requires much more than words for the telling. There shall be much more than words too Honey, believe me. I will have to leave you for now Darling and go to bed, I am not going to stay up to see the New Year in because I am very sleepy but I will say Happy New Year to us Darling, it will be the most wonderful year in the world except for the ones that come after it and find us man and wife. Each succeeding year of our married life will be happier than the one that went before and this will go on .....FOREVER.



Here I am back again. I did write to you before today but one of the fellows decided to clean house and threw away the second installment of this letter to you.

We are now approaching the halfway mark on our trip. As of noon today, the third of ~~January~~ January, we have covered three thousand miles. We will hit the date line the day after tomorrow and will have two Fridays. I think we will hit the States about the fourteenth, which will be eleven days from now. This loss of a day is all very confusing.

The weather is getting rather rough at the present time. We are in the roughest weather I have yet seen out here in the Pacific and the ship lists from side to side all the time. It is so bad that I am having trouble with the typewriter because the spring is not strong enough to pull the carriage along when we are leaning to one side. Added to this is the fact that the ship shudders and shakes all the time and you can see that we are having quite a time here. I think we will run into a storm in a day or so and that this is the start of it right now. I hope we are able to skirt it though because I do not care for the idea of any rougher weather than we are having at the present time. It is also getting quite cool now. I just about freeze to death each morning when I take my daily shower. The water is not my great problem, it is the wind which whistles through the shower room that bothers me. There is a wide space between the top of the walls and the roof of the shower rooms on this ship and the wind really whistles in through this and down my back as well as elsewhere. It is very cold. I will have to admit that I feel much better afterward, but I ask myself if it is worth it.

My work was done very early today. We had the paper ready to print at noontime. This is tomorrow's paper. All afternoon all I had to do was talk and read. It was very nice. I think I will have to do this more often. I do not intend to kill myself on this trip and so am going to get by with the minimum of work. I do as little art work on the paper as I can and still have it looking decent. The fellows are more interested in the news than anything else anyway. I dug out my pens and ink and will try to do a little pen and ink work on the ship. Notice that I said I will try. I am more restless when I was when I was on land overseas. I just cannot concentrate on anything. I know that when I get ashore and am married to you that this trouble will disappear because the main reason for this feeling is that I am away from you and that I want more than anything to be with you. I have no peace of mind and can't concentrate on anything. I will be so damned thankful to be with you once more Honey.

I have been having some nice lengthy talks with the chaplain on this ship. He is a very nice character who used to be a missionary in Africa, Sierra Leone to be exact. I have not been going to him with my troubles, the reason I have these talks with him is that I work in his office because that is the only space available for me to work on my drawings. When he comes in, we usually have a long chat on politics or the state of the world. He is a very liberal minded man for a clergyman. We have not yet talked on the subject of religion and I have been purposely steering away from the subject. I have an idea it would be interesting to talk it over with him though because he is the kind of man who would listen out what I had to say and who would not shrink from me as someone unclean. I am having a lot of fun shocking the fellow who is working as his assistant. He is one of the boys from the Command and is a good boy but was brought up a little too strictly by his parents. I should not use the word strictly either because that is not what I mean. I mean that this is a very strict protestant family and that he was always in the shadow of the church and of his mother's apron strings. He tried to be a very regular fellow but is just a little too stiff. I am trying to relax him a little but I am not having too much luck. It is fun trying. He was quite shocked when he heard that I did not go to church and did not



consider myself as belonging to any faith. I told him that you were not a churchgoer either. This just about floored him and he tried to explain to me that the foundation of any marriage is the religious life of the couple. I told him that I agreed with him and that since neither you or I believed in any formal religion we should get along fine in our religious life. Marriage to you will be my religion Darling, it will be everything in life to me and will be that always.

It still does not seem possible that I am on the way home and that we will soon be married. I really mean that Honey. It just does not seem real to me yet and it shall not seem real until the day when I take you in my arms again. Then and only then will I realize that it is all true and that I am out of the army and ~~marry~~ that our life together is to start at last. I miss you so my Darling. It seems that the nearer I get to you, the more I miss you.

The movie is about to start now Honey so I will give you a quick kiss and will leave to see it. I will be back again shortly so just don't go away. I love you with all my heart Sweetheart.

Fred die